

## PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE NEW MODEL LAUNCHED FOR FAMILY-TO-FAMILY SUPPORT

**19 April 2011** – The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) today launches a new and radically different model of family support, Family by Family.

Family by Family responds to the growing national problem of too many families who are stressed or in crisis, not with another welfare program, but by building local networks of families helping other families to thrive.

Designed with families for all families, Family by Family engages families who have experiences to share and families seeking change.

Family by Family finds and trains families who have made it through tough times, pairs them with families who want things to change, and supports family pairs to grow and change together.

Across Australia there has been a 51% increase in the number of children removed from their families and placed in out-of-home care since 2005. There are big economic and human costs of intervening too late. (AIHW 2011. Child protection Australia 2009-10. Child welfare series no. 51. Cat. no. CWS 39. Canberra: AIHW.).

“Family by Family takes a radically different approach to traditional early intervention services,” said TACSI CEO Brenton Caffin. “It offers a community-led way for all families to support each other to live the lives they want.”

Family by Family is the first product of TACSI’s radical redesign team and the first use of the radical redesign approach in Australia. For the past 12 months, the TACSI team worked closely with 100 families from the Adelaide suburb of Marion to co-design and prototype Family by Family.

“Now that we know Family by Family can prompt change for families, our focus is on helping it grow and scale across other Australian communities,” said Caffin. “As an incubator for social innovation, TACSI tests new ideas, but also helps them grow to scale and maximum social impact. Our vision is to see Family by Family available to families across Australia. “

Developed in partnership between The Australian Centre for Social Innovation, the City of Marion, Families SA through the Department of Families and Communities, and UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide, Family by Family demonstrates a new way of finding and using local resource to address pressing national challenges.

The TACSI team spent hundreds of hours with families in their homes to understand their lives, develop and visualise ideas, and test and improve those ideas so they prompted measurable change.

“This approach turns traditional public policy on its head,” said Caffin. “We started with a problem and a blank canvas, and worked together to learn what does and doesn’t work for families, to develop ideas with them, and ultimately to run a live solution.”

Family by Family Director Carolyn Curtis said:

“I’ve spent the last 10 years working with the child protection system where families have no choice but to engage. Family by Family starts with where families are at. We work with all families – from families in crisis, to families post crisis, to families wanting more from life – to give them the support and role models to move forward.”

**Next page: Media opportunities, fact sheet and quotes from Family by Family partners**

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### Media opportunities:

- Interviews with TACSI CEO Brenton Caffin and Family by Family Director Carolyn Curtis.

### Media resources

- VIDEO: An embeddable four minute summary video of the The Family by Family documentary film can be viewed at <http://tiny.cc/fbyf>
- PHOTOS: High resolution photos from the Family by Family prototype are available upon request
- DVD: A DVD of the Family by Family documentary film is also available upon request.

### Quotes from Family by Family partners:

- President ACOSS and Chief Executive, UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide, Simon Schrapel
- Families SA Executive Director David Waterford
- Mayor, City of Marion, Felicity-Ann Lewis

#### Quote Simon Schrapel, Chief Executive, UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide:

“When I first encountered Family by Family, I thought this is absolutely the approach UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide is wanting to embrace. Our vision is to create just and compassionate communities in which all people can participate and flourish. That is what Family by Family does. Family by Family uses the assets and resources in the community to support other people in the community. That’s why we we’re investing in growing Family by Family.”

#### Quote David Waterford, Executive Director of Families SA:

“At Families SA, we want more for families. We partnered with The Australian Centre for Social Innovation because we need to apply out of the box thinking and develop new ways to keep children safe and families from entering the child protection system. We seconded a staff member to the project to help us learn new ways of working with families before and after crisis. Family by Family demonstrates that families are more than just clients; they are a critical part of the solution.”

#### Quote Felicity-Ann Lewis, Mayor of Marion:

“Marion Council was involved with Family by Family right from the start because we are committed to improving the lives of our community. The program uses the strengths of the families within our community to assist other families to build their skills and develop resilience. It has not only connected families to Marion’s services, but also given families who don’t usually use our resources the confidence to become involved.

I hope the program continues to grow in Marion and spreads to other local areas.”

## FACT SHEET

### Why Family by Family?

- All families experience stress. Every family the radical redesign team met – and they met hundreds – talked about the stress in their life. LifeLine Australia found that 91% of Australians are stressed by at least one area of their life. (Lifeline Australia. 2008. “Stressed out Australia - Survey sparks call for urgent change.”)
- Stress can build to breaking point. Without strong social support, stress can overwhelm a family. Family breakdown, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect are all too common consequences.
- Families want to thrive, not just survive. Families don’t just want to avert crisis. Families want to move towards what they want. Family by Family has been designed to enable all families to thrive. Thriving families are a resource to other families, and to communities.
- Families don’t want another service response. Family by Family is a network of families helping families. It is not another professional service. There are no eligibility requirements.

### What’s different about Family by Family?

- Thriving is the outcome. Family by Family raises the bar on what success means for families. It’s not just about keeping families from crisis or helping families get by. It’s about enabling all families to thrive.
- Families are the resource. Instead of relying on government or social services, Family by Family unlocks a hidden resource in the community: families who have been through tough times and are now thriving. More thriving families = more resource.
- Designed with families. Family by Family is the first solution to come from using the radical redesign approach in Australia. The radical redesign approach works with people, from the ground-up, to develop and test solutions they want to be a part of and that prompt change.

### About Radical Redesign

In 2010, TACSI began an initiative to radically redesign social services. The radical redesign approach draws on design, social science, community development, and business methods to work out what outcomes people actually want, and test solutions so they create change. This contrasts with traditional approaches to policy making which adopt a ‘top down’ and ‘output driven’ approach to the design and delivery of social services.

This is the first example of this blended methodology being used in Australia. It has been used in the UK to successfully redesign public services. Next, TACSI will apply the radical redesign methodology to develop new solutions to the rapidly ageing population. We are currently scouring the world to build a team to learn and use the radical redesign approach. You can learn more about our team building efforts at [www.tacsi.org.au/joinus](http://www.tacsi.org.au/joinus)

### About TACSI

The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) exists to identify and support the innovative ideas, methods and people that will contribute to and accelerate positive social change. To turn bold ideas into better lives. We are a social innovation laboratory (more a ‘do-tank’ than a ‘think tank’) set-up to test ideas, methods and projects and broker partnerships between all the different players in the social innovation space (from individuals to community groups, companies to government).

We believe experimentation and learning are critical to solving the tough social challenges of our time. We create a safe and rigorous space for that experimentation and learning to occur.